
A
DISCOURSE
OF
SCHISM.

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L I G E N S ' D,

Novemb. 27. 1689.

J. F.

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DISCOURSE
OF
SCHISM
FOR THE
BENEFIT
OF HUMBLE
CHRISTIANS.

L O N D O N,

Printed for *W. Crook* at the *Green Dragon* without
Temple-Bar. 1690.

DISCOURSE

SCHISM

BENT

CHRISTIAN

LONDON

Printed for W. Clark at the Green Dragon without
Temple Bar. 1690.

A
DISCOURSE
OF
Schism, &c.

WHEN the Devil tempted our blessed Lord to turn the stone into bread, our Lord defended himself against the Temptation with a Text of Scripture, *Man shall not live by bread alone.* The Devil presently thinks he may make as bold with the holy Scripture as our Saviour: And tempting him, after that, to cast himself from the Pinnacle, he gives him a Text of Scripture for his security, *He shall give his Angels* Ps. 91. 11. *a charge concerning thee.* From which insolence of the Devil, Christian People may, if they will, make

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the advantage to learn and understand so much that the Devil and his active Ministers, the Ministers of Heresie and uncharitable Schism, will be bold to make use of the Scriptures, for Reasons well known to himself, and not unknown to the Church of Christ neither: As St. Paul saith, *For we are not ignorant of his devices.*

2 Cor. 2.
11.

Namely, in the first place, to distract us in our apprehensions of the Truth, because one saith, *This Opinion is Truth*, and brings a Scripture for it. And another saith, *This Opinion*, quite contrary, is Truth; and brings a Scripture for it: Therefore we should be willing to conclude, That there is no certainty in any thing: and that to trouble our selves any further about Religion or Truth, is but lost Labour. Upon which account the Devil hath brought too many to put that very question in mockery, which Pilate did: *What is Truth?* As who should say, Who can tell what it is, or where it is?

Joh. 18.
38.

If the Devil by this device can bring men to question the reality of Religion, he hath gain'd a great point against Heaven, and the Salvation of the Soule of men. And to the great grief of many good Ministers, and many other good Christians, he hath gain'd the point so far, That from the ill use of Scriptures made either by proud and ignorant men, or by deceitful and malicious men, too many are content to lay aside the common regard of Religion. But I hope a seasonable Admonition, if it doth not restrain the one from perverse teaching, yet may inform the other, *That an enemy hath done this:*

this: And that it is a most inexcusable weakness to gratifie that Enemy, by playing into his hand, and to cast away the care of their own Souls, that he may boast the success of his design against their Souls.

Another bad End for which the Devil by perverse Teachers maketh use of Scripture, is to bring us into a mistrust or neglect of the Scriptures, because both sides of the Controversie defend themselves by the Scriptures, and yet both sides cannot be in the right; therefore to conclude, that there is no great heed to be given to them. That seeing there is so much confusion by wrangling out of the Scriptures, therefore we may permit the Bible to rest upon our shelves, or close the Book, and give it again to the Minister, as the Church of *Rome* would have it. But notwithstanding the whole Plea, of the Papists, it is plainly ridiculous to affirm, That good Books must be seal'd up, because bad men oftentimes abuse a good Author: especially such a Book, which is of such general and necessary use to the whole World, to all sorts and conditions of men, and in those things which are of greater concernment to them, than all the World. The ill use which some make of it, can never balance the common benefit, no more than if we should conclude, That a River which runs continually to the great advantage of the whole Country, must be dried up, because now and then a mischance happens by it. But if a man cast himself in wilfully beyond his depth, and be lost: certainly the advantage of the *constant Stream* is much more to be

valued than such a Loss : And no man can hurt himself by reading the Scriptures, but 'tis his own fault, and most commonly his pride. But on the other side, no words can express the large benefit which all good Christians receive by this daily Exercise of reading the Scriptures ; I may say, both good Christians and bad : For as the good are daily improv'd, so by the same Divine Word, the bad are oftentimes reform'd. And indeed for this end from Heaven God hath sent us these his lively Oracles, and committed them to our Trust, not that common Christians should wrangle out of them : For this is indeed *profaning of that which is Holy* ; but, as *David* did, That they should with humility, and a full sense of God's favour in bestowing such a Treasure on them, meditate in them all the days of their lives.

Another bad End for which the Devil doth abuse the Scripture, and us, by misapplication, is to bring us into Errour of Practice : And how the Devil hath made use of evil men, to abuse both themselves and the Scriptures unto this evil end, our former unhappy Times did sufficiently testify. When all manner of Uncleanness was justified, not by those who confess themselves slaves to their Concupiscence, but by those who pretended to Perfection and Seraphic attainments in Religion ; because the Scripture saith, but never spake it for them, *That there is nothing common or unclean ; and, To the pure all things are pure.*

But because the Devil is so busie, and so fortunate in perverting men by the Agency of false Teachers,

Teachers, it is needful for us to learn what advantages he must have over us to deceive us. Now one great advantage he has, if he find us faulty in Practice: And how many have there been among us, who having lived ignorantly and carelessly in the Church of God to such or such an age, on a sudden have been caught away, and beguiled into perverse Opinions, for no other reason at all, but because they never minded, nor cared to understand that blessed Religion whereinto they were baptized, nor to live worthy of it in a sober and humble Conversation. According to that Prophecy of St. Paul, *Because they received not the love of the Truth, that they might be saved, for this cause God shall send them strong delusions, that they should believe a Lye.* They had received the Truth, and were baptized into it, but they never set their affections on it: Therefore Delusion seizeth them before they are aware: And in God's severe but most just Judgment, they become zealous for a Lye, because they were not zealous and fervent in the Truth. And the Apostle gives the same reason, why many, upon his own uncomfortable Observation, *had made shipwrack of their Faith*, namely, because before that, they had made shipwrack of a good Conscience. And, as I hinted before, 'tis true enough among our selves, that there are many, who either wanting good Education, or not wanting ill Examples, instead of giving heed to the Religion whereinto they were baptized, grow up into an ungodly and vicious Life, to the shame of all Religion, and to their own. Of these men some make a sudden

2 Thess.
2. 10.

1 Tim. 12.
19.

den change, and strike off into Schism, where perhaps for a while they behave themselves somewhat more modestly. But tho' a conversion from Vice to Virtue, if it be real, is good; yet whatever their conversion be, their manner in it is very bad; while they do both ignorantly and prophane-ly impute their former ill-living to the barrenness of our Religion, which much more *honestly* should be imputed to the violence of their own evil and untractable Inclination. For had they duly reflected, as in conscience they were bound, upon their Baptism and their Catechism, upon the Instructions of the one, and the mighty Obligation of the other, they had never needed to strike into any way of Separation, to mend themselves, their Faith, or their Conversation. I say it again; Had they duly apply'd themselves to their Catechism, which tho' it be to teach us when we are young, yet it is also to be constantly and seriously meditated from our youth and upward, and tho' we be never so old. And would Men but humble their soaring Ignorance, to try the Experiment, they should find it much more available unto certainty in Knowledge, stability in Faith, and unto a good Life, I say much more available than all the lavish pretences of a Conventicle.

Another advantage the Devil hath to seduce us, is, if he find us wavering and indifferent in our Principles: That we think we may adventure to go any where, and to hear any thing, upon that common pretence of *trying all things, and holding fast that which is good*; A Text which the Apostle gave us, not to make us Adventurers, as so many are, but

but to make us afraid of adventuring. But so it is, that by the Fallacy which cunning Men put upon us from this wary Text, we boldly venture, and are foolishly ensnar'd: And instead of holding fast that which was very good, we are at last held so fast by that which is evil, that we have no power to deliver our selves. For we may understand, that as in matters of Fact, so in matters of Faith, the Devil proceedeth by degrees, and doth not make us the worst of Men, nor the worst of Hereticks presently. And so we may observe him to proceed in our own Church with many, who once did think themselves bound in conscience to keep the Unity of the Church in its Publick Worship.

Upon some new thoughts which they take up, they think they may adventure to go to a private Meeting: Yet still keeping some conscience and reverence for the Church of God, because whatever Religion they have, from the Church they know that they receiv'd it; and so they divide themselves between the Church and the private Meeting. This is their first step toward Schism: And in them is that Text of St. James now fulfilled, *A double minded* James 1. *Man is unstable in all his ways.* 8.

After some time, and by a custom of hearing those that have no kindness for our Church, certain Jealousies and Prejudices are dropt into them, perhaps at first to themselves insensible, and perhaps such against which themselves had resolved: And now they begin to have slight apprehensions of Gods Church, and a great admiration and zeal for private Teachers; and on them they bestow all their attendance, and the Church

Church hath lost them. This is their second step towards Schism.

Yet still they have so much respect for their Old Religion, and so much fear and tenderness for New Ways, that they will go to no other Teachers but those that hold the Doctrines and Sacraments of the Church. Then they will hear; and for fear of the worst, they resolve to go no farther: But the common Enemy of the Churches Peace is resolved otherwise.

Therefore, after some longer time they meet with new Solicitations: For there are no Religious Parties but have their Factors to bring in Profelytes: And now they begin to be told, That their new Teachers are almost as bad as their old; and therefore if they will have the true Purity of Religion, they must go farther.

And so they go, tho' at first with some reluctancy, to hear what another Faction can say for themselves, and for their renewed Baptism, and for the immediate Calling of their unlearned Teachers: And within a while, by those affectionate Plausibilities with which simple Hearts are deceiv'd, and, as the

1. Pet. 2. 14. Apostle saith, unstable Souls beguil'd, they are taken in this Snare too. This is another step which they make in Schism.

And now Doctrines, and Sacraments, and Ministers, both Conformist and Non-Conformist, are all Antichristian: And now they are happily come out of *Babylon*; and now they are come to the New *Jerusalem*: Terms, not to say Mysteries, which neither they, nor their uneducated Teachers understand.

stand. And now they wonder that they should continue in ignorance so long; and in their simplicity bless God for the great Light which shineth to them; and now they are at their rest.

But not quite at their rest yet. For after some time spent in this new Brotherhood, they are told again, That they have been hitherto looking after a Christ without them; But if they will come to perfection, they must look after a Christ within them; and so they swallow this Bait too. And now all manner of Preaching is but the Teachings of Men, and all outward Sacraments are but Shadows which must vanish away: And the Holy Scripture it self is but a dead Letter. This is another step which they make in their Schism.

And by this time Years begin to grow upon them; and upon the whole account they find, that they have made but a small matter of it, and conclude by themselves, that others have made as little of it as themselves. Since they took their first flight from the Church of God, they can perceive no certainty in Religion; and 'tis a wonder if they should. For as *a Bird that wanders from his Nest, saith Solomon, so is* Prov. 27.
a Man that wanders from his place: And so is a Christian that wanders from the Church. And we have a wise Proverb of our own, *That a rowling Stone never gathers Moss.* Therefore they resolve to make sure of something, and to set themselves close to the Pleasures or Gain of this World, leaving it to their Youngers to follow the chase of Religion, whereof themselves begin to be weary. So fatal is the Event of wandring from Faction to Faction, and of gratify-

gratifying new Pretenders in their unsound and impertinent Opinions.

Another advantage the Devil hath to abuse us into Error, and to make us the froward Instruments of abusing others, if he find us unskilful in the Scriptures: Now there is no other way to be skilful in them, but either by Education and Industry, or by Inspiration; unto which Inspiration, the Apostles of our Lord were beholding for their skill. Therefore if we have not the benefit of Revelation, and I know none that have; for they that pretend most to it, are most certainly farthest from it; But if we have not this extraordinary advantage, to understand the Scriptures, we must be educated to understand them, that is, we must bestow great pains and time, with daily Prayer, in the use of those Means and Helps which are proper for the right understanding of those Sacred Books. Wherefore St. Paul gives it in charge to no meaner a Man than *Timothy*, To give himself to Reading and Meditation. And they that have bestow'd most labour with Prayer and Humility, from their youth and forward, have most reason comfortably to expect the Blessing of God upon their labour: For God useth and delighteth to proportion his Blessing to our honest Endeavours. We must therefore take pains to acquaint our selves with the rational part of Learning, for the improvement of our natural Capacity, namely, our Invention and Judgment.

For tho' common Education be sufficient to improve our Understanding for the World, that is, for Trade or worldly Dealing: Yet it is not sufficient to

to give us an understanding in those Matters, whether natural or supernatural, which are separated from the common use of the World: Such as the Scriptures, with the Mysteries therein contain'd, undoubtedly are. And therefore to attain a due knowledge in *them*, or in other parts of Wisdom of like nature, as *Solomon* tells us, with the greatest desire and intention of our mind, we also must be *separated*. Prov. 18.
1.

Besides this, great pains is requir'd to understand those Languages wherein the Holy Scriptures were first written, together with those other Languages that have affinity with them; so that by one Language, we may improve the knowledge of the other; and by comparing the one with the other, we may more clearly and readily find out the true meaning of those pieces of Scripture, which without the benefit of such Helps, would certainly remain obscure and unintelligible. For tho' a faithful Translation, as ours is, in the vulgar Tongue, be sufficient for the People, and a great Blessing for them too, to teach them their plain Duty towards God, and the great Mercies and Promises of God toward them: Yet such a Translation is not sufficient for their Teachers, much less for those that take upon them to oppose the Teachers, that take upon them to vent new Doctrines, and to deny received Principles. For seeing by these means they endeavour to be counted extraordinary, it is very fitting they should shew something extraordinary; it is very equitably demanded of them, either that they shew the Skill of Languages, or the Gift of Languages, because the

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Scriptures

Scriptures are not to be understood, so much as is fitting for a Teacher to understand, without the help of Languages.

Besides this, more pains is needful also, to acquaint our selves with the History of the several Ages wherein the several parts of Scripture were written, to acquaint our selves with the Description of those Places and Countries which in the Scriptures are mentioned, together with the Manners and Customs of those People and Countries where the Scriptures were written; all which do eminently conduce to illustrate the Scriptures.

All these kinds of Knowledge in some good measure are needful to a Teacher, that he may be a ready Scribe for the Kingdom of God, able to instruct the People in the Mysteries both of the Old Testament and the New; and they that too much or altogether want these Helps, or are not capable, for want of a due Education to make use of these Helps, and yet will busie themselves to new model Church, and Scriptures, and Christian Religion, as suiteth best to their own bent and humour: These are the unskilful Men over whom the Devil hath advantage, both to seduce them, and to make them his violent Instruments of seducing others unto perverse Opinions, and proud Contentions against the Church of God: For Knowledge in the Scripture by continued Industry they have not, neither are they ever like to have it, for want of being train'd up unto those other pieces of useful Knowledge, which are preparatory. And Knowledge by Revelation they have not; if they say they have, it is most certainly a Presumption.

on, for which they will give a heavy account; as well as for their boldness in perverting the Scriptures.

For unto these are the words of St. Peter to be apply'd, where speaking of some difficult places in St. Pauls Epistles, he tells us, That *they that are unlearned and unstable do wrest them, and other Scriptures, to their own destruction*; and not undeservedly, because they wrest them to the destruction of others. And tho' they tell us, that St. Peter doth not mean what we call Learning, and that he himself in that sense was an unlearned Man; they are plainly mistaken: For he doth certainly mean the want of that which we call Learning; and he himself was a learned Man, tho' not by the same means, yet in the same sense, which we call Learning; not when he was a Fisher-man; but after the Ascension of our Lord, and the coming of the Holy Ghost, when He and his Fellow-Apostles received power to publish the Gospel to the World; only with this difference, That they received this vast Learning by present Inspiration, and we attain it in slower and shorter measures, by industry and pains-taking. But the very same Learning it is in them and in us, and wanting in those who now falsely pretend the Gifts of Apostleship; the very same Abilities of Invention, and Judgment, and Languages, in the Apostles and in us, but in them much more enlarged, without which themselves had not been able either to publish the Gospel or to interpret the Scriptures.

Another great advantage the Devil hath over us, if he perceive us to be Men of vehement Passions, and

2 Pet. 3.
16.

and thereby rash and inconsiderate; forward and credulous. For very true it is, tho' we think, and would perswade our selves, that we go by our Reason; yet the greatest part of the World are guided by their Passions, and in matters of Religion too.

Hence it is, that many are carried off out of a Contempt, or Prejudice, or Revenge against their Minister, because he hath shun'd to comply with their Vices; or because he hath hapned to give them some cause or other of offence. For a Minister may be over-taken with a fault as well as others, tho' they ought, because they are strictly commanded to
 1 Pet. 5. 3. be *Ensamples to the Flock*, to take more care than others. Yet this private offence from the Minister, whether just or unjust, is a very unjustifiable cause of forsaking the Church, because we have much greater Reasons to keep the Unity of Christ's Church, than we can have not to pardon our Minister. The
 Mal. 2. 7. Prophet speaks it very plainly, As the Priests lips are to preserve knowledge, so the People are to seek the Law or Rule of their Religion from his mouth, because he is the Messenger of God to the people. But then in the mean time, how uncomfortable do those Ministers live among their people, who make it the work and the design of their whole lives to teach and instruct their people, both old and young: And yet in many places neither old nor young will give their Attendance, or but very thin and slenderly. I shall say no more of it but this, That every good Christian, I should think, could not chuse but be very tender of grieving his Minister

Minister in those things which so nearly concern the comfort of his Office, and their own eternal Benefit. And let me add further: As it cannot be expected, that so many thousand Parishes, as are within our own Church of *England*, should be supplied with men of great Abilities; so we are to know, that the Church hath sufficiently provided for every man's Salvation, with his own faithful endeavour. And if the Minister of every Parish, tho' he have not those Abilities which beget admiration and applause, do honestly discharge his Duty, in performing all the parts of his *publick* Ministry, and *private* Admonition. And if the people, being convinced of the Truth of Christian Religion, and the necessity of it to their Salvation, will, with an humble and an earnest mind, apply themselves to receive and lay up in their hearts all those Gospel-Instructions provided for them in the several parts of our publick Worship; I may be bold to say, it is impossible, by the Grace of God, that any one Soul in any one Parish should miss of Salvation. But here is the great fault, the Sun doth not want light, and the Church doth not want the means of Salvation; but we want hearts to make use of the means: And the blame most uncharitably is mis-laid upon the Church. Blessed be God, we have the means: But as the slothful Servant suffer'd his Talent to lye dead in his Napkin, so the means of Grace lye dead by us, and we lye dead by them. The ill-living of a Minister, as it is too severely objected, so it must not be denied to be a great Prejudice upon the People, because it is so directly contrary to the design

design of the Gospel, to the Nature of Religion, and to every good Word which proceeds out of their own mouths from the Pulpit. And therefore if any such there be, by all the Powers of their Religion, and by the Zeal and Tenderness and Love which they profess to their own Church, and for the amendment of their own Accounts in the Day of Judgment, if I could, I would oblige them to cut off this occasion presently from those that are too forward to seek, and too glad to find the occasion, that they may insult over our Reproach. But he is a wise Christian that will distinguish between the Office and Infirmities of a Minister, and will not be so unnatural to forsake the Church of his Education, and the Christian Fellowship of his Brethren, for the faults of any particular Ministers in the Church. And if they will be so restless as to double their own Condemnation, however he shall receive a double Reward, both for being and living like a Christian, and also for overcoming the Scandal with a true Christian Spirit. He is a wise Christian that will consider, and they that are most uncharitable to make the Objection against us, should wisely consider it; That if any of their dividing Parties were grown into the same bulk, they would be found guilty of the same faults, perhaps of greater. There is History for it, which I forbear upon choice, because it becomes us to be tender of reflecting, when we are willing to have our own faults cover'd. *In a great House,* saith St. Paul, his meaning is, in a great Church, *there are not only Vessels of gold and silver, but also of wood and stone,*
some

some to honour, and some to dishonour. And in a Church of so great extent as ours, it ought not to be an occasion of Reviling, or Separation, that such offences are among us; but rather of Admiration and Thanksgiving unto God, that the Offences are no greater. So much the more, when we may be assur'd, That God hath much more kindness for his People, than to take away his Presence, Spirit, and Blessing from his *own* Ministry and Sacraments, in *their* due attendance on them, for any personal blemishes or offences in the Minister. It is the pleasure of God, that the Treasure of his Gospel and Sacraments should be committed into *earthen Vessels*. 2 Cor. 4.
7. And if his People will not be perverse in their own wrong, they shall be sure of that Treasure, tho' the Vessel crack and perish.

But to proceed. Many are carried off from the Communion of our Church out of a willingness to comply with, or a fear to disoblige greater persons fallen into the same Perswasion, on whom they have a wonted dependance. Many out of hopes of improving their Interest and Trade, because they have no other way of livelihood but Trading, and no other way to get into Trade but by Interest. Many of discontent, because they are disappointed of their worldly expectation, or preferment.

Now tho' these and such like Passions and irregular Humors be the first and certain Causes of our falling into Schism, yet this is not to be confess'd, because there are other fair pretences, tho' but pre-
D
tences,

tences, to hide the true Reason : And the true Reason is not the best Reason ; therefore it must be conceal'd. For tho' men are mightily carried by their Passions, and love to be sway'd by them, both in Religious matters, and other matters too ; yet their Reason tells them, that they should not be moved by such Springs. And therefore tho' a Passion were the first Cause of forsaking the Church, yet they reserve so much respect for their Reason and for Themselves, as not to yield that they go by any meaner Rule, being bashful to think that they should shew themselves guilty of so great an Infirmary : Yea undoubtedly many of them are so overcome by their own Passions, that they verily think their Passion to be Reason. For Passion hath confidence enough to call it self Reason.

Now if upon the Evidence of what hath been discoursed, we are willing to resist the enticement of private Teachers, and to keep the Unity of a well-ordered Church, for the present Security of it and of our selves, and which is highly to be valued, for the preservation also of a sober and a sound Religion to our Posterity, by following this plain Advice, we shall not only be willing, but able to defend our selves.

In the first place, let us never give present Assent to any new Opinion that pretends Scripture. It was the Commendation of the *Bereans*, That they
 Act. 17. 11. *searched the Scripture daily, that is, diligently, whether those things were so, whether the Doctrine deliver'd*

liver'd by St. Paul concerning Jesus Christ, were indeed agreeable to the Scriptures. And much more reasonably have we need to examine those new Doctrines which are impos'd upon Christian People by private Teachers, who by no other advantage can put off their adulterate Coyn, their unsound Opinions, but by an ignorant Confidence in themselves, and an ignorant Easiness in the People. Certainly it was good Counsel which was given by St. John, *Beloved, believe not every Spirit.* And how much ^{1 Joh. 4. 1.} then do they forget themselves, that will believe every Spirit, and suffer themselves to be carried about with every blast of new Doctrine?

Let us be sure to keep our selves humble. 'Tis a very great word from the mouth of our Saviour, *Whoever shall humble himself as a Child, the same is* ^{Mat. 18. 4.} *greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven.* There is nothing like this to keep us in the right way. *Be not* ^{Rom. 12. 16;} *wise, saith St. Paul, in your own Conceits. Let no* ^{ver. 3.} *man think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but let him think soberly.* Do not think of your selves above your Education. Do not think that you know more than those who have taken much more likely pains to gain knowledge: And for this good End, That in an orderly way they might be able to instruct Christian People, whose private Callings and manner of Life, require them to bestow the greatest part of their time in other lawful Labours. Remember the words of St. Paul, *If any* ^{1 Cor. 8. 2.} *man think that he knoweth any thing, he knoweth no- thing yet as he ought.*

Joh. 7. 17.

Let us be sure to yield Obedience with an honest heart to the plain Precepts of our Religion. The words of our Lord are greatly to be observed, *If any Man will do his Will, he shall know of the Doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of my self.* And therefore, how can those Men justify themselves who begin all their Reformation and Religiousness with the transgression of plain Commandments, with most unchristian Prejudices against their lawful and laborious Pastors, and I might call it, with a proud contempt of many good Christians? Whose Society in Religion they have forsaken, as thinking themselves too holy for so general a Communion.

Lastly, Let us take continual pains to settle and confirm our selves in the plain Principles of our Religion. They are the uncatechized Christians that are so easie to receive every new Impression, because they have no Foundation in themselves whereon to build a good Resolution; whereas, if we would by frequent Meditation thoroughly digest the great Mysteries of Christianity, which we have receiv'd, and do confess, we should quickly find so much evidence and certainty in our own Religion, as to despise the childishness and foppery of new Pretenders. We should be so well stock'd with Principles of sound Faith, and by those Principles so powerfully obliged to a good Life, as to see it a very needless thing to look out any further, and should have an innocent boldness to tell seducing Teachers, That they may very well spare their busy Labours.

And

And whatever our worldly occasions necessarily are, we may find time enough, if we will not bestow it worse, to search into our Religion. In the intervals of your Trade, when you are resting at home in the Evening, when you are in your Bed, and your Sleep goes from you, you may sometimes take your Baptism into your Meditation, and examine what great Mercies from Heaven God hath bestow'd upon you in your participation of that great Sacrament; And what great Obligations are upon you by your Baptism, and by the abundant Mercy of God toward you therein: That therein you are made Members of Christ's mystical Body, and adopted to be the Children of God; and if Children, Heirs. And that now in gratitude, you can do no less than conform your selves, as obedient Children, to the Will of your Heavenly Father, that you may not receive your Baptism and all the Grace of it in vain:

Sometimes you may take your Creed, or some part of it at a time, for your Meditation, and begin with one Article after another, and tell your selves what your own great Faith is, namely, That you do believe in the living and true God who made Heaven and Earth, That you believe that blessed Jesus to be your Saviour, who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, and born of the blessed Virgin *Mary*, That you do believe he died, and rose again for the Redemption of Mankind, That you believe he visibly ascended into Heaven, and now sitteth to be your effectual Intercessor at the right Hand of God, That you believe

he will come again to judge the World, and therefore will prepare your self all days of your Life, that you may be found at his right hand; That you believe in the Holy Ghost, and that God hath given him indeed to you, to be your great Comforter and Conductor through all the difficulties of this present Life; That you believe the Holy Catholick Church, and therefore will never break off from it to any private Faction; That you believe the Communion of Saints, and therefore will live in all manner of holy Conversation, worthy of so blessed, so heavenly a Communion; That you believe the forgiveness of Sins, through the mercy of God in Jesus Christ, to the unspeakable comfort of your penitent Soul; That you believe the Resurrection of your Body out of the Grave, with the happy exchange of Incorruption and Glory, for all the present blemishes of Mortality; And as the Crown of all, That you believe everlasting Life in everlasting Happiness, which God most assuredly hath promis'd, and the heart of man cannot at present conceive.

And in these Meditations abide for some time, and stick upon every one of these great Mysteries, and bring them over and over again into your miads, that you may more and more increase your own Understanding in them, and more and more confirm your Faith of them.

And if you have not leisure enough to meditate on all these at once, begin where you left off at your next leisure; and reckon upon it, That the Sacraments

ments and your Creed, your Duty to God and your Duty to your Neighbour, are to be the constant Subject of your Meditations all your Life long ; The wholesome Diet on which your mind must feed, the daily Bread which must nourish your Souls to eternal Life.

If Christians will be persuaded to exercise their thoughts diligently in these things, it will make them, that they shall be much more able to instruct and convince the Teachers of Division, than to need any new Instructions from them.

Now the God of Peace who delighteth in the Order and Unity of his Church, even as a Father in the Concord of his Family, direct all our Hearts into one common Fellowship of Faith and Worship, as we are all redeemed and called by one common Saviour, our Lord Jesus Christ, unto one Hope of eternal Glory.

F I N I S.

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